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ABSTRACT

There are two very distinct schools of thought concerning the causation of many of Appalachia's problems. One school treats the region's socio-cultural peculiarities as the major cause of developmental problems; the other blames the coal industry. This paper suggests that, at the base, both schools of thought are valid in explaining cause and effect. In other words, the autonomous qualities and social organization of early rural Appalachia were such that they made possible the subsequent encroachment of the coal industry on the region. Some drastic technological changes have occurred in rural Appalachia in the last few decades which have correspondingly brought about drastic changes in the rural social organization and in development outlook, including the role of the coal industry. This paper presents an overview of these changes, and answers other specific questions such as: Was the closing of coal mines the reason for the Great Appalachian Out-Migration? Why have rural Appalachians moved to the city later than other rural people, including those of more prosperous regions? Why did the so-called "culture of poverty" appear among low-income families which only a few decades earlier were considered respectable and norm abiding? Why is it so difficult to change these families today? Why, in spite of increased educational level and level of living has fundamentalism persisted in rural Appalachia? Future trends which are speculative in nature are discussed. (Author/NQ)

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an overview of the processes of social transition in rural appalachia

August 1977

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. THE COMMUNITY OF NEIGHBORS AND KIN	2
B. SOCIAL PROCESSES BEFORE AND DURING THE GREAT APPALACHIAN MIGRATION	3
C. THE PERIOD DURING AND AFTER THE GREAT APPALACHIAN MIGRATION	9
1. Changes With and Among Institutions	9
2. Overall Changes in Rural Social Organizations	15
(a) Social Differentiation and Flexibility	15
(b) Formation and Preservation of Deviant Subsystems .	16
D. RECONSIDERATION--THE FUTURE	17
APPENDIX	27

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESSES OF SOCIAL
TRANSITION IN RURAL APPALACHIA

Recent reviews of studies of Appalachia point out that there continue to be two very distinct schools of thought concerning the causation of many of Appalachia's problems.¹ One of the two schools treats the socio-cultural peculiarities of the region as the major cause of developmental problems; the other school places the blame on the coal industry. Articles such as the one by Helene Lewis describe the major arguments of these two schools of thought.²

This paper presents a theoretical framework that puts both approaches to the problem into common perspective and suggests that, at the base, they are both valid in explaining cause and effect. In other words, the two schools of thought are closely interrelated; in very simple terms, the autonomous qualities and social organization of early rural Appalachia were such that they made possible the subsequent encroachment of the coal industry on the region. Some drastic technological changes have occurred in rural Appalachia in the last few decades which have correspondingly brought about drastic changes in the rural social organization and in development outlook, including the role of the coal industry.

This paper presents an overview of these changes. It is based in a large part on material, in part empirical, already published by this author.³ This synthesis, which is in part concentrating on

¹Frank S. Riddel, "Whence Came the Problems?" in Appalachia: Its People, Heritage, and Problems, Frank S. Riddel, ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall and Hunt Publishing Co., 1975), Part IV, p. 221.

²Helene Lewis, "Fatalism and the Coal Industry," Mountain Life and Work, 46 (Dec. 1970), pp. 4-15; also see Steven L. Fisher, "Victim-Blaming in Appalachia: Cultural Theories and the Southern Mountaineer," in Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present, Bruce Ergood and Bruce E. Kuhre eds., (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall and Hunt Publishing Co., 1976), p. 139-148.

³For empirical testing of selected propositions see: John Photiadis and B. B. Maurer "Community Size and Social Attributes" Appalachian Center Research Report No. 5, (1973); John Photiadis, Leonard Sizer, and Jim Way, "Migration and Occupational Adjustment of West Virginians in the City," Office of Research and Development: (Appalachian Center, West Virginia University, 1974); John Photiadis, "West Virginians in their Own State and Cleveland, Ohio" Revised Edition, (Office of Research and Development, West Virginia University, 1975). For theoretical analysis involving selected propositions see: John Photiadis and Richard Ball, "Changes in Rural Normative Patterns," Journal of Rural Sociology, 41, 11 (1976).

problem areas, involves only very small parts of previous papers and as a consequence, with few exceptions, no references.

The paper will also answer other specific questions such as: Is it true that the closing of coal mines was the reason for the Great Appalachian Out-Migration? Why have rural Appalachians moved to the city later than other rural people, including those of more prosperous regions? Why did the so-called "culture of poverty" appear among low-income families which only a few decades earlier were considered respectable and norm abiding? Why is it so difficult to change these families today? Why, in spite of increased educational level and level of living has fundamentalism persisted in rural Appalachia? Finally the last part of the paper deals with future trends; it is in some respects speculative in nature and should be considered only as a supplement to the main part of the paper.

A. The Community of Neighbors and Kin

In her book Neighbor and Kin, Elmora Matthews describes the early rural Appalachian community as isolated and consisting of highly cohesive kinship systems.⁴ Because of this isolation and cohesiveness the early rural Appalachian community, and even the rural community before the forties, survived as a relatively independent social system (For a simplified description of the nature of the Social System, see Appendix). The system retained or modified, independently of the larger American society, a particular set of beliefs upon which its ideology and value orientations were based. This belief system and its ideology were strongly influenced by two things: (1) the beliefs and value orientation of the early settlers, and (2) the type of interaction patterns fostered by the physical make-up and isolation of the region. Thus, values such as individualism, traditionalism, religious fundamentalism, familism, and life in harmony with nature gained greater prominence in the hierarchy of value orientations of rural Appalachia than they did in urban areas within and outside the region. The opposite effect occurred for values such as economic achievement and materialism which were identified with the major cultural themes in urban America.⁵

⁴Elmora Matthews, Neighbor and Kin (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1965).

⁵Obviously there are considerable cultural and social differences among the various subregions of Appalachia and among communities within each subregion. Such differences are not of direct concern to us here. Our main interest is the study of processes of change determined by basic factors, such as extensive face to face interaction; limited, physically isolated territory; relative homogeneity in terms of basic personality attributes such as values; and those aspects of the impact of the larger society on the rural social system as determined by societal themes such as the intrinsic value of economic success and material comfort.

Because values are predispositions to action and are used as the criteria for making choices in life, interaction patterns among members which eventually produce family and community social organization were in line with these values, thus contributing to the solidarity of the system. Additional accord, and in turn, solidarity, was added because relatives in the beginning tended to settle close to each other; neighbor and kin were often chosen in marriage. Thus, in later years, this became what we call a kinship neighborhood. These patterns of interaction, which we recognize as the rural social system, and the relationship between the social system and the personality system (including the value orientation we mentioned), were further cemented by moral values based on religious fundamentalism. At that time fundamentalism was by far the predominant type of religious conviction. Consequently, the early rural Southern Appalachian society was highly integrated, and this integration was based on a close accord between social and personality systems as well as the cultural system that emerged, and the technology then in existence. Elements of the social system such as norms, status, and objectives which constitute the structure of the system were well-defined and accepted; they performed the function expected of them. In relation to the latter, the same was true with the functions that were performed in the system and particularly the processes of communication, institutionalization, and most importantly for our analysis, the process of boundary maintenance.⁶

Thus, high integration within protected isolation allowed the rural Appalachian society to function as a relatively autonomous social system. This autonomy could be easily seen in that reference groups (the people one compares himself with to regulate his behavior) were primarily within the community and the kinship system, and not outside. Therefore, reference groups outside the local community, which could change the orientations of these people in some respects, were not extensive. For instance, an individual normally did not compare his income or the facilities in his house with those of similar status outside the region. Comparisons were made primarily with respect to other individuals--his kinfolk or friends--within the region and, more so, within the community and neighborhood.

B. Social Processes Before and During the Great Appalachian Migration

In recent years a number of drastic cultural changes, particularly technological ones (i.e., automobiles, hard surfaced roads, radios, televisions, and industrialization) have affected the isolation of the region and, in turn, the relationship between the region and the larger American society. Among the most important changes of this nature have been the rapid improvements in mass communication and transportation,

⁶The process through which solidarity, identity and interaction patterns within the system are preserved. For more information see Appendix.

the availability of employment opportunities in urban centers, and the subsequent improvements in formal education.⁷ Thus, during the forties, isolation of the rural Appalachian social system began to decrease rapidly, while the important process of interaction and communication with the outside increased in intensity. Those few who had already left⁸--especially during and immediately after the war years--contributed to the intensity of these two processes through visits and other contacts.⁹ Interaction and communication are the two most crucial processes helping the incorporation of one social system into another (the larger society in this case) or the weakening of an old system (the rural community). In other words, a crucial indirect function of the availability of jobs in cities, such as Cleveland and Cincinnati, weakened the boundary maintenance mechanism of the rural social system and increased the use of the outside as a reference group. Thus, beginning with the more educated and the young, rural Appalachians increasingly began to compare themselves in terms of income and level of living--the themes of the larger American society--with outsiders, and the urban lower middle class in particular. The latter is the group portrayed most often by mass media, and the group the few Appalachians then in the city looked up to.

This shifting of reference groups to groups outside the region became most obvious during the fifties when Appalachians, rural in particular, became more sensitive than before about concepts such as low income and poverty. During the early years of migration, television increased this sensitivity by frequently presenting the plight of the rural Appalachian in the city.¹⁰ Such presentations also increased the sensitivity of certain upper and middle class urban Appalachians who, since they were already using the outside as a reference

⁷As we explain elsewhere, in developing societies today this drastic change in the relationship between rural communities and larger society and, in turn, rapid out-migration takes place in spite of limited changes in rural education and employment opportunities in the city.

⁸Relatively limited out-migration always existed.

⁹Including relatives visiting them in the city.

¹⁰Mass media, television in particular, contributed to this sensitivity by frequently showing barefoot children and the congestion of the so-called Appalachian ghettos in the city during the first years of the migration process. Later when Appalachians adjusted to the city, and as it appears now quite successfully, the issue was not emotional enough to attract the attention of the national television news services. At least this is what we assumed in the early seventies when we sent official data to the three major networks depicting the successful adjustment of Appalachians in the city, and for the sake of a more balanced presentation, we asked them to report the information. Unfortunately they never did.

group, felt that their status (in relation to the outsiders) was in some respects lowered. Thus, often consciously, they attempted to increase the sensitivity of the rural Appalachian, and in this way hoped that rural Appalachians (whose life style only a few decades earlier was often seen as idyllic) would come closer to the American standard. In this way, possible threats to their status within the American society would be eliminated.

Later you will see that the fifties and possibly the sixties also appear to have been periods when considerable social discords developed. This, at least, seems to have been the case in West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. These discords refer to the breaking down of parts of the social and personality systems and of the relationship between the two. Rural Appalachians, in particular the more educated and the young, especially young women, felt that there was another more prestigious system ready to accept them. As a consequence, they felt that they no longer depended on their community as much as before, and therefore did not have to pay the system by obeying its norms as strictly. Similarly, because social values and more importantly social organization were shifting rapidly, a number of individuals had difficulty adjusting to the new changes. Also, the anxieties this maladjustment had produced increased the desire to join styles of life and social systems which were in some ways non-conventional, though suitable for alleviating anxieties of those who had difficulties adjusting.

The purpose of the above discussion is: first, to serve as an introduction to parts of the analysis that follows; and second, to encourage those interested in understanding the appearance of non-conventional forms (for instance the appearance in some hollows in the last few decades of symptoms resembling the so-called "culture of poverty") to be aware of the processes described in the following pages.

After World War II, out-migration and identification with the outside kept increasing in intensity; along with these processes, the incorporation of the rural into the larger society social system, the use of the latter as a reference group and consequential strong feelings of relative deprivation were also increasing.¹¹ Because such feelings had become part of the basic motivational orientation of large numbers of individuals, social organization, norms, and social pressures for

¹¹Deprivation at this point refers to both income and city life. This type of deprivation was not felt as much during the years just prior to World War II; the following represents a fairly frequent response, given during a brief survey conducted in Boone County, West Virginia, of older Appalachians with good memories. ". . . I knew I could make more money in Detroit but I felt I had a good life right here and I also didn't want to work for someone else, but my son and grandson took those jobs and they were glad they did."

performance in line with expectations of the larger society also kept increasing rapidly. But (due in part to exploitation by outsiders) there were no means to fulfill such expectations, and more out-migration followed, leading to closer socio-psychological integration into the larger society. This, in turn, further increased out-migration.

Job opportunities in the city made this mutual dependence between migration and incorporation into the larger society possible. Thus, regardless of whether they were suited physically, culturally, or mentally for the move, or prepared for city employment, the large majority of young adult men and women left Appalachian farm communities within less than two decades. Soon relatively similar changes took place in rural mining communities.¹² The duration of the out-migration period was often different for different communities.

Along with the rest of the rural social system, boundary maintenance mechanisms--for instance, norms suggesting that you cannot find a true friend in the city, or that the good life is in the hollows--were rapidly losing their effectiveness as time went by. On the other hand, pressure for economic achievement from outside and within, and in turn out-migration, kept rapidly increasing to the extent that for many, the rural community started becoming a negative reference group. Community norms became ineffective, moral was low and alienation for some was high, and in some cases the rural social organization almost collapsed.¹³ This stage of transition, which--at least in Appalachia--was initiated and usually sustained by the availability of city jobs, often leads to a mass exodus of rural populations.¹⁴

From the point of view of action programs, understanding these processes is important because at a certain point of the transition, out-migration occurs at a faster rate than city employment can absorb it; also, people leave their communities regardless of their preparation or fitness for city life. This creates a number of problems afterwards. This type of exodus--which was first observed and in turn reported on

¹²Out-migration from non-coal producing counties was heaviest in the forties and the fifties, while for the coal producing counties heavy out-migration occurred in the fifties and the sixties.

¹³Research data indicates that alienation (at least during the sixties) was higher in rural counties than in urban West Virginia counties. See John Photiadis and B. B. Maurer, *op. cit.* The findings are contrary to earlier information about communities in general which depict rural communities as less alienated than urban.

¹⁴In less developed societies, this process often takes place with a much more limited city job market; but the attraction of city life becomes a more important factor than in Appalachia.

the basis of present data about Appalachia¹⁵--is taking place today in a number of countries of intermediate development, including South America and the Middle East. In other less developed countries it will probably take place in the near future.¹⁶

In practice then, the nature of the autonomy of the rural social system (usually associated with satisfaction with life) was what kept the rural Appalachian in the hollows long enough for groups, such as Eastern Europeans, to settle in the west side of Cleveland where a couple of decades later (when Eastern Europeans were moving out into higher socio-economic status neighborhoods) rural Appalachians moved in.¹⁷

During the fifties and sixties, the hastened move to the city was in part aggravated by mechanization, particularly the introduction of the continuous miner, and by the low price of coal; but areas and sometimes entire Appalachian states that are non-coal producing have also shown similar, although sometimes less intense, transition patterns. On the other hand, a demand for wages similar to those outside the region, in addition to the disappearance of subsistence farms, contributed to the closing of less efficient coal mines or otherwise speeded up their mechanization.

As compared to the coal miner, it was more difficult for the Appalachian farmer practicing general farming to act upon feelings of relative deprivation. This was because he could not expand or specialize his farm and thus become an integrated member of the larger agricultural or economic systems. Thus during the forties and fifties,

¹⁵See John Photiadis and Joe Simoni "The Changing Rural Religious Institution" paper presented at the Fourth World Congress for Rural Sociology, Torun, Poland, August 1976.

¹⁶Typical in this case is the large number of unemployed young men wandering about big cities in Asia, Africa, and South America, and families living in the periphery of such cities in squalor. When these people are asked whether they like this style of life better than life in their villages, they tend to respond negatively; and when asked why they left, they usually do not have a specific explanation, at least during the first years after they migrate.

¹⁷This type of succession of immigrants by a white protestant group is probably unique in this country but can be explained by the satisfaction with life in the early rural Appalachian community where considerable accord among personality, social system, and culture systems existed. However, when in later years, this accord was disrupted (in part because society let rural Appalachians know that they should not be satisfied with their lives), considerable changes, including rapid out-migration, took place.

the majority of farmers left the region. Despite the fact that the coal mining industry was to a great degree integrated into the larger economic system, miners, as indicated by their low wages, were themselves only partially integrated. The development of new mining equipment (i.e., the "continuous miner") along with demands by the unions for higher wages contributed to the elimination of less efficient, often individually owned mines in the fifties and sixties. This enhanced a speedy out-migration. In other words, in comparison with the farm group, the interplay of economic and social dimensions that influenced the group of rural miners was probably more limited while the functions of the economic factors were more independent from the social ones. As we explain later, the fact that the rural family of the past functioned as both a social and economic unit, with a particular value orientation that supported it, is in terms of transition an additional reason for the differences between farmers and miners.

It is obvious, particularly after the local system lost its autonomy, that the processes we described above were influenced by the factor "income differential" between rural Appalachia and the industrial centers; the greater the differences the faster the out-migration.¹⁸

Due to more limited isolation and more economic potential, the incorporation (socio-psychological and otherwise) of the rural into the urban social system was slower in the more agricultural regions of America (and probably the rest of the world) such as the plains of the Midwest.¹⁹

Data from a survey we conducted in the city of Cleveland indicated that concerning adjustment in the city during the initial stages of migration, West Virginians moved to the so-called "Appalachian ghetto"; but gradually, the large majority moved to the suburbs and the interstitial area between ghetto and suburbs. There are several times more West Virginians in the suburbs of Cleveland today than in the so-called "Appalachian ghetto". The adjustment of these suburbanities has been much better than was expected; welfare is almost non-existent and it is much lower than the rest of the population of Cleveland. Similarly,

¹⁸The reasons for this relationship are both social and material--because behavior in line with expectations of the new reference group became more urgent when differences increased--and because migration into the city implies material comforts that are associated with city living.

¹⁹This is true in areas where agriculture is a more valuable option and land can be consolidated into economic units. This is not feasible in the hollows of Appalachia.

"alienation,"²⁰ which is higher in rural as compared to urban West Virginia, is lower among West Virginians in Cleveland as compared to West Virginians in their own state (including urbanites).²¹ Finally, the socioeconomic profile of the West Virginian suburbanite reflects that of middle class America, including conservatism.²² Concerning attributes such as those we just mentioned, it is quite probable that West Virginians living in the so-called "interstitial area" between ghetto and suburbs fall somewhere in the middle.

C. The Period During and After the Great Appalachian Migration

The regions rapid changes not only produced rapid out-migration and social discords, but they also influenced the organization of the personality of those left behind or returned; particularly, they produced strain, often severe, on the rural personality. More generally, these strains were produced because, directly or indirectly, accelerated technological changes eventually led to discord between cultural, social, and personality systems. In order to reduce such tensions and keep them within manageable bounds, society--whether its dynamic aspects are viewed as a self-equilibrating or a tension-management process--is inevitably forced to bring about changes in the crucial aspects of the individual's social environment. These changes refer in particular, first to the main social institutions which as we know serve the individual's most important needs; and second to the more general aspects of the rural social organization (e.g., norms, statuses, etc.). We examine each of these changes below.

1. Changes Within and Among Major Rural Social Institutions

Because, as we pointed out, the theme of the new reference group (the larger society) was higher income and level of living, the economic institution was under the most severe pressure to perform (this includes not only economic but also associated social dimensions, including values and attitudes toward aspects of the economy). As a consequence, the central axis of reorientation of the major rural social institutions, and the institution which was under the most severe pressure to perform,

²⁰Measured in terms of "bewilderment and confusion" and "mistrust of government officials." See John Photiadis, "West Virginians in their Own State and Cleveland, Ohio," op. cit.

²¹This is in contrast to findings about certain groups of non-Appalachian migrants in the city of New York.

²²For more information see John Photiadis, "West Virginians in their Own State and Cleveland, Ohio," op. cit.

was and still is the economic institution. Obviously, the first response to this pressure was the separation of the economic from the social functions of the family; for instance, children left the farm where the family worked as both a social and economic unit, and became more economically efficient by performing more specialized tasks in other aspects of the economy. In general, differentiation and specialization became crucial processes that facilitated the integration of not only the economy but also the entire rural social organization into the larger society.

Changes in other major institutions are to a large extent supportive responses to changes in the economic institutions. Changes in government and education often have as a purpose the enhancement and facilitation of the effectiveness of the economic institution; other changes, for instance within the family institution, both facilitate economic developments and also allow the family to act more or less as a buffer, absorbing undesirable consequences of social, economic, or psychological dislocations produced by changes in the economy. Finally, others, the church for instance, come primarily to perform the buffer function mentioned above. Due to space limitations we will examine only the family and the church.

Changes in the Family Institution: Due to out-migration within a brief period of time, the average rural Appalachian family became what the French sociologist LePlay called a "stem family"; although still functioning as a system, its various branches were located hundreds of miles apart. Because of such attributes, particularly in recent years, the "stem family" became the most important mechanism affecting the migration of Appalachians and their adjustment to urban centers. In general terms, the above processes are universal and eventually lead to the predominance of the conjugal family.

Because of the new pressures for performance which accompanied the perceived expectations of the larger society, many families, in particular those with greater resources who remained in the mountains, began changing (in most respects) in a fashion similar to the way rural families had elsewhere, and modeled themselves (although in some cases more slowly than elsewhere) after the norms and life styles of the larger society.

Differences between these families and rural families elsewhere usually existed primarily because of differences in the time that certain practices were adopted; for instance, in the fifties when family size was on the increase in the rest of the country, it was on the decline in rural Appalachia, except in very isolated counties. As we have explained elsewhere, the fifties were the years when rural Appalachia (with the exception of isolated counties) was under the most pressure to perform according to the expectations of the larger society and consequently to raise income and level of living. Smaller family size was obviously a factor that could help in this effort.

Families that returned to Appalachia in the first years after migration, usually with older or unskilled husbands, sometimes showed deviancy patterns similar to those of some families with limited means who for one reason or another had not migrated. Furthermore, the loosening of the control of the central norms of the community or kinship neighborhood systems facilitated more diverse and sometimes deviant modes of family adjustment. Thus, certain rural low-income families, which because of implications for action programs we emphasize here, not only developed more permissive normative patterns, but tended to stretch some of the traditional and also the middle class values they had adopted from the larger society. At the same time they retained old values, such as "sectarian fundamentalism" and "life in harmony with nature".

Often, however, even families with greater means, including some older families, were faced with new adjustment problems. Problems produced by the breaking up of family relationships (due to out-migration and other factors) led to certain social and psychological discords, for example the Kentucky Syndrome. This is described as involving symptoms such as school phobias for the young, dependent personality disorders, deviations in social development and psychophysical reactions that are seen as a consequence of the breaking up of family relationships.²³

On the other hand, due to the closeness of the family, these studies reveal a striking absence of disorders based on emotional deprivation; for example, the complete lack of infant autism and suicide, and the ability of the youngsters to avoid alienation symptoms (other than those caused by the separation from family) produced by societal pressures, for instance during college attendance.

In general, the pressures of the mass society on the personalities of some rural Appalachians produced tension that to be alleviated required more diverse and more suitable social systems and new supportive personality mechanisms. Because personalities, or the personality system, constitute the foundation of the social system, nonconventional family styles capable of alleviating stress increased in numbers, during the fifties in particular. According to psychiatric writers such as Cole and Loof, to cope with the families' feelings that they were performing in a more or less deviant manner, some members (often fathers) developed

²³David Loof, Appalachia's Children (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1971). This is different from what is sometimes referred to as the McDowell County Syndrome, a term West Virginia University psychiatrists use to describe families in which the father, often a coal miner, is an alcoholic who fraternizes extensively with other men, the mother of five or so children shows symptoms of depression, the family morale is low, and consequentially the family unit has difficulties adjusting to the larger society.

rationalizations, some already mentioned and others such as psychosomatic illnesses like backaches or headaches, which are often found among heads of household—including women with children—who are on welfare. Furthermore in order to secure the necessary social support, families of this type—in particular when the head is a male—tend to associate with similar types of families. Small numbers of farm families of this type—often located on mountain slopes—were in existence even in the twenties when the previously described symptoms of the impact of the larger society had started gradually being felt. But families in discord during the twenties (and also teens and thirties) were noticeable primarily in the new mining communities. The discords in question were not due to outside pressures and external migration (which for the purpose of comparison with mountainous communities of the world we emphasize here), but due to migration within the region. Farm families, dislodged from their primary groups and the stability of subsistence farming, moved into the new and rapidly changing communities of newcomers—often including foreigners and some blacks—where employment was unstable and exploitation of workers was common. In contrast to the farm community there were those—usually managerial personnel—who treated the newcomers as social inferiors.²⁴ For such communities the forties and the first part of the fifties could be seen as a period of adjustment and community consolidation which, however, did not last. The more direct pressures from the outside, which we are emphasizing in this paper, aggravated by mechanization, led to out-migration, new family discords, and new forms of rural community disorganization.

The first families that shifted into forms which might be called "maladjustment" had children who were born and socialized in this environment. Some of these children, when grown, developed personality attributes that bridged the gap between the low-income family and larger society; however, some other families, in particular after the World War II years, increasingly developed attributes that eventually produced life styles resembling what we call the "culture of poverty". Social interrelationships and supporting psychological conditions characterizing this type of culture tend to drastically reduce the ability of the family to adjust to the larger society, at least in a non-deviant form. Owing to new economic opportunities and the fact

²⁴Referring to the mining communities of Harlan County Kentucky of the twenties and thirties Cressey indicated that the "... restraints of family clan and neighborhood ceased to be effective. The social values of the frontier society lost their meaning in these new communities. Competition and exploitation replaced friendly mutual aid as social relations became casual and impersonal. The people found themselves living in a human wilderness." Paul F. Cressey "Social Disorganization and Reorganization in Harlan County, Kentucky," American Sociological Review, 14, 111 (June 1949).

that many of the parents of such families have passed into the older age group now, the number of such families with parents of less than 65 years of age seems to be decreasing noticeably. Furthermore, within a single county one can find communities with very different proportions of rural families of this type; the same is true about differences among counties and states within the region.

It is obvious that the lack of employment opportunities and isolation have been factors which influenced the style of these families and neighborhoods, in particular during the fifties and sixties. However, a few neighborhoods consisting of families of this type can be found in hollows close to urban centers within Appalachia, where jobs are generally not as scarce and conditions are less isolated. At least in the case of West Virginia, newer neighborhoods of this type sometimes are formed by families which try to avoid the social pressures of the small urban center.

Considering the present social autonomy of these families, which is in large part the result of a functional relationship between the rural social system and larger society, and associated socialization practices, it is quite possible that families of this type will persist into the future, and new ones may appear. And as we explained, this might often be the case in spite of efforts of action agencies.

Circumstances opposite to those surrounding the families that have retreated into situations resembling the so-called "culture of poverty" occurred with most other rural families and probably the majority of city migrants. As we mentioned, in 1968 there were several times more West Virginians living in the suburbs of Cleveland than in the so-called Appalachian ghetto; and these people exhibit a middle class level of living. The victims of the migratory process are often among early returned migrants, usually unskilled or semiskilled and often older, some of whom retreated into sectarian churches and the welfare rolls. But the very recent migrants are different; they tend to be skilled and return not to retreat or retire but to fulfill societal expectations, particularly in terms of higher income and higher level of living which mining jobs can provide. In general, such families (or other rural social systems with conventional forms of adjustment during the fifties and sixties) which are by far more numerous are of lesser importance to this analysis.

Changes in the Religious Institutions: The extent of differentiation that took place in the family and the other rural social institutions did not take place in terms of religion, and fundamentalist religion in particular. Fundamentalist religion, especially sectarian, has remained almost intact during this transition process, although other sectors of the religious institution changed in line with changes elsewhere. As was the case with the other institutions, the reason for the change or lack of change in religion was to facilitate integration into the larger society. This was true

with institutionalized churches which changed the way churches elsewhere did. Our data support a proposition suggesting that the reorientation of the religious institution in Appalachia offers opportunities for adjustment of all segments of the socioeconomic structure. In particular, in order to help the often dislocated poor, the emotional fundamentalist and sectarian aspects of Appalachian religion have remained stable, if not strengthened. In order to help those who are not dislocated, but who need social recognition and association, Appalachian institutionalized religion has changed to become a more suitable status maintenance and stabilization vehicle.

Those who become dispossessed, deprived, and alienated victims of the social and technological upheaval in Appalachia are found to be those exhibiting the greatest need for the support of religion. The aged, poor, less educated, alienated, and infirm all rank significantly higher in religiosity than the socially well-adjusted.²⁵ Significantly, people in the rural areas rank higher in the emotional aspects of religiosity. This is consistently true regarding most aspects of religiosity, more so in the more emotional aspects; in the case of church participation, however, the relationship tends to be reversed. In the context of the theoretical framework we have used here, this suggests that expressive emotional types of religion seem to be associated with attributes of individuals and groups who (due to modern complexity and change, among other reasons) have experienced greater dislocation. On the other hand, church participation, the least emotional aspect of religiosity, is a different dimension: it is often associated not only with the dislocated but also with individuals and groups who have experienced less dislocation. The latter would seem to imply the use of religion as a status maintenance and stabilization vehicle by many, including those who do well in society.

Institutionalized religion, as represented by the established churches of Appalachia, reflects the society of which it is a part. One of its major functions is a conservative one--to uphold the values and norms of society and help to maintain a stable social structure. For those individuals whose needs are met by the social order, religion's role, particularly in Appalachia, is a supportive one and higher church participation, therefore, tends to be more positively correlated with the socially well-adjusted.²⁶

²⁵John Photiadis and B. B. Maurer, op. cit.

²⁶The implications of these findings in the light of the church's historic ministry of healing and reconciliation appear to be twofold: (1) the role of institutionalized religion to restore the dispossessed to fuller participation in society, and (2) the role of religion in stabilizing societal change and minimizing dislocation and deprivation. See John Photiadis and B. B. Maurer, op. cit. Also see B. B. Maurer, "Our Religious Heritage," in Mountain Heritage, B. B. Maurer, ed. (Morgantown, WV, Printing Company, 1974).

The contribution of Sectarian Fundamentalist religion to the adjustment of rural low-income Appalachians mentioned above can provide insight into the causes of the Kanawha County (West Virginia) textbook controversy, and why it occurred in the heart of Appalachia. The national mass media described the controversy as "a moral conflict between the sophisticated and affluent residents of the city of Charleston, West Virginia, and the working class residents of the rural hollows surrounding the city." We have already noted that sectarian fundamentalist churches have been very effective in helping many people deal with the "relative deprivation" the working classes felt (in particular when in proximity to a more prestigious group) during the turbulent years of transition. On the other hand, these churches, as relevant research data indicate, tend to support conservative and often ethnocentric views; this is a probable reason why members of these churches have found some of the textbooks used in the Kanawha County Schools less moral and patriotic than desirable.

2. Overall Changes in Rural Social Organizations

Increase in Social Differentiation and Flexibility: As the case with the major social institutions, the overall Appalachian rural social organization (i.e., values, statuses, objectives, norms, etc.) in large part changed to facilitate social integration into the larger society. Below we describe only changes in the overall organization, and because of space limitations we describe only the changes in norms which constitute the most representative and in turn the most important aspect of the social organization. Furthermore, and again because of implications for action programs, we emphasize throughout this analysis non-conventional as compared to the more numerous conventional changes in normative patterns.

Our data show that (as the case has been with social institutions) integration into the larger society has been facilitated in large part through a process of differentiation of local normative structures. For instance, through the past few decades certain subgroups within the mountain villages tend to develop distinct normative patterns of their own much faster than they did in the past. First, there is a tendency for subgroups to differentiate themselves from the previously homogeneous village life and to identify with subgroups located outside the village system. Such village subgroups realize that they are not on a par with those elements of the larger society which are increasingly becoming important reference groups, particularly the urban groups corresponding to their own. Second, there is a tendency for some subgroups, such as the low-income families we described, to develop normative patterns different from those of the local community and the larger society.

Similarly, some normative subsystems change more slowly than others and some old ones are actually strengthened. The preservation of such traditional and often stable subsystems often operates as a means for the individual to hold onto something of the past, thereby preserving the link between individual personality system and the changing social

system; other times it may involve different interpretations of the same underlying value, changes in the hierarchy of values of a segment of the population, and increased differences between social and cultural values. In general, although that part of the larger society's culture dealing with technology and societal themes has been adopted by parts of rural Appalachia quite rapidly, other parts of the rural Appalachian sociocultural system serve increasingly as buffers to alleviate pressures originating in the outside system, rather than the inside one.

Formation and Preservation of Deviant Subsystems: Most small rural communities in Appalachia have declined considerably in population, altered in population composition, and include many more older people now. A number of such communities show different degrees of those patterns of normative discord which have been characterized as rural alienation.²⁷ The normative autonomy of various subsystems had in a few cases, in particular during the fifties, increased beyond differentiation to a point of disorganization. Today one such subsystem consists of cliques of individuals who are on partial or complete public assistance, often including some returned migrants and others who, for some reason--physical, social, or psychological--are no longer employed or are underemployed. Another type, which includes the families characterized by the so-called "culture of poverty" we described above, has tended to stretch values and develop norms which deviate considerably from those of the community at large. This type supports, for example, certain deviant attitudes regarding style and level of living, often including the acceptance of welfare checks as a way of life, which are not part of Appalachian tradition.²⁸

One may also find in the Appalachians--probably most often in West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky--a certain form of the so-called deviant neighborhood, often located in a relatively isolated hollow. Some of the residents of these few scattered neighborhoods are on relief, some work part time, and some are fully employed; few pay much attention to norms other than those of their own group. For example, sexual relations in such settlements show extreme variations which are in some cases considerably different from those of most rural Appalachian communities. At least as data collected in 1968 indicate, in some of these neighborhoods there had been surprisingly little out-migration, and many people who did leave have returned.

²⁷This trend is indicated by empirical data presented in the Appalachian Center's Research Bulletin No. 5: John Photiadis and B. B. Maurer, "Community Size and Social Attributes" (Morgantown: West Virginia University, 1972).

²⁸For a psychological interpretation of reasons behind behavior of this type see Richard Ball, "A Poverty Case: The Analgesic Subculture of the Southern Appalachians," The American Sociological Review, 33, vi (December 1968).

Finally, there is a form of rural social system (family or neighborhood) which, in contrast to the existing conventional traditional system, has remained traditional as a result of boundary maintenance mechanisms supported by the previously described emotionalism of sectarian fundamentalist religion. As in the previous case, the strength of the system frequently rests upon alienation related to unrealized economic aspirations, inability to cope with increasing social complexity, and finally, institutionalization of the new tendencies. This system also tends to remain somewhat isolated. As in the other forms of non-conventional neighborhoods, its members are characterized by extremely low levels of formal social participation.

D. Reconsideration--The Future

All projections into the future based upon the above findings and notions will of course be in part speculative in nature, and therefore this section should be considered as supplementary to what has gone before.

In most of contemporary rural Appalachia, the processes of differentiation and integration have resulted in changes which are different than the ones we just described. One is struck by the extent to which change has produced systems with a higher "tolerance quotient". Newer norms suggest a "live and let live" attitude. Normative mechanisms (e.g., generalized suspicion, kinship emphasis) which once supported system autonomy and emphasized differences between the rural social systems and the larger society have declined in importance. The new valuations do not tend to function as boundary maintenance mechanisms, as did the older valuations a number of decades ago when the rural society was relatively autonomous, but function more as mechanisms reducing the tension produced by the rapid incorporation of the rural system into the urban system.²⁹ In more recent years, and since the energy crisis in particular, the new economic flexibility has increased the contributions to integration of most such mechanisms. This type of flexibility now allows many rural Appalachians to follow transition patterns similar to those of rural people elsewhere.

On the other hand, the powerful motivation for higher level of living, which provided the source for much of the normative change and out-migration, is in certain situations decreasing. The image is emerging of a comparatively simpler society, less achievement--oriented than in the forties and fifties. The new image is often sustained by values emphasizing the traditional way of life, and norms which stress simplicity and harmony with nature, often centering around friendship and hunting and fishing. These new, traditionalistic constellations of norms have different origins than those of a few decades ago which, in part, were

²⁹Family members in the city have contributed considerably to these attitude changes and still do.

based on the relative autonomy and solidarity of the rural social system. The new norms appear to rest upon motivational supports emerging out of personalities which, as a result of new complexity and raised expectations, have long been under strain and need something to hold to. In contrast to the war years our data show that in recent years, particularly the fifties, there was more alienation in the small rural, as compared to the larger Appalachian community.³⁰ This is probably less the case today when means and desires are better balanced and an increasing number of individuals, including the young, appear to have both highly materialistic aspirations and integrated personalities. More favorable attitudes towards rural life among not only rural, but city people as well, also serves to contribute to greater satisfaction with rural life and a greater opportunity for smooth integration within the rural community.

Another factor important to the new social organization and internal integration is the presence of personalities which, having been socialized primarily within the rural social system manifest basically similar value orientations in spite of the increase in value conflict. A related factor is, of course, the still limited socioeconomic diversity and large numbers of older people within the majority of rural Appalachian communities. Still, some of the non-conventional families, those that are characterized by "the culture of poverty" in particular, will probably follow at least for a while an independent, in terms of conformity, integration into the larger society.

The communities that have adapted successfully have often combined older normative patterns into a new socioeconomic configuration. One example is the trend toward part-time farming, now prevalent in Appalachia, and at least today theoretically sound, which will allow one to combine business and pleasure, to work the land without being dependent upon it, and to maintain old ties while retaining the potential for both geographic and social mobility.

Some general factors that are expected to contribute to an increasingly conventional integration of rural Appalachia into the larger society are: (1) From the economic point of view, rapidly increased employment and higher wages in the mines, and greater possibilities for good returns from mountainous agriculture. In addition, as technology advances, possibilities may occur for more commercial types of agricultural enterprises and more than that industrial enterprises. (2) From the social and psychological point of view, more favorable attitudes of urban people towards rural life and the new inward look into values. People are reevaluating the old Appalachian culture

³⁰This is the decade in which, as we have indicated, the most rapid shifting of reference groups occurred, and along with it a combination of high social pressures for economic success and material comfort, and only limited means for achieving them.

based less on the sensitivities that appeared in the last few decades (for instance, those produced by feelings that individuals and communities have been left behind in terms of major themes of the larger society), and more on faith in the future and confidence that there is a certain value in the old. Extensive discords in large urban centers and the physical makeup of the region (providing a more or less controlled social environment and attractive physical one) have contributed to the creation of this new reality.³¹

The new reality, which is actually a result of experience with rapid changes and the discords they can produce, is expected to both reduce conflict within the new forms the rural Appalachian society is acquiring and also increase its integration into the larger society. However, the integration of those rural groups we termed deviant, or "systems in retreat" will most likely be much slower even when their change is directed by action agencies. This is because, as pointed out, a major reason for their resistance to conventional integration is the nature of their past relationships with other social systems, in particular to the larger society, which have been extremely dynamic and by now highly institutionalized. As a consequence, besides knowledge of conventional principles of directed change, agents working with what will remain as "problem groups or individuals" should probably be aware of principles and theories such as those presented in the previous pages.

This analysis has pointed out the interplay of economic and social dimensions during the recent so-called "Great Rural to Urban Appalachian Transition." Recent technological changes, often implemented through the economic system, have been major mechanisms through which the integration of the rural society into the larger society system is taking place; but social dimensions, which due to the nature of this study we particularly emphasize, have also played an independent and important role.³² Before the so-called "Great Out-Migration", rural Appalachians stayed in their communities considerably longer than economic rationality would have prescribed, and when they decided to move out they did so considerably faster than such rationality would prescribe (the latter is true particularly when one considers the extent of the

³¹"As megalopolis consumes the east, let there be the haven of West Virginia, the dreams of her mountains, and the song of her streams. May her natural resources fire the nation's industries, and may her people prosper. But may the beauty of her land remain secure to soothe man's soul." Elizabeth A. Moize, National Geographic, 149, 1 (1976), p. 785.

³²Regarding the independent role of either economic or social dimensions we refer primarily to cause and effect relationships falling within a limited time sequence. This is because the independent function of either social or economic dimension, although almost always present, can be pointed out most clearly at certain periods of the rural Appalachian transition.

social and psychological discords this rapid exodus has produced). Similarly, economic rationality does not seem to greatly influence many of those who never left rural Appalachia, including members of groups which could be seen as deviant and people who moved into the region for the first time, following the "return to nature" movement.

As we explained elsewhere, comparative studies have indicated that the overall patterns of rural Appalachian transition appear to be universal; such patterns can be seen today taking place under the same form, but different cultural content, in mountainous regions of developing societies elsewhere. Similarly the rural Appalachians are one of the many groups that in recent years are undergoing an enforced and uneven integration into the larger American society (lower socio-economic strata and certain racial groups are similar examples). Ideologies which lead to such values as materialism and consumerism have in recent years been adopted more than before by rural Appalachians (as egalitarianism has been adopted more strongly by racial or sex groups); this has in essence created more discords than did changes in other subsystems of society.

The feelings of deprivation and marginality caused by the growing attachment to the ideologies of consumerism, materialism, and economic achievement, and the exposure to bombardment by a variety of often contradictory stimuli (usually sensory) have, as explained in the first part of the paper created for a number of rural Appalachians more stress than they can absorb. The effect of this excessive stress can be seen in the attributes of families we have called "families in retreat", while the effect of similar but manageable strain (which is often considered desirable) can be seen in the success of West Virginians in the suburbs of Cleveland, as well as indirectly in the recent pressure for greater efficiency within major rural social institutions, such as government and education. This type of stress and the consequent tendency for retreat was in existence even in the twenties though at a much more limited scale. But as sociopsychological linkage with the larger society kept increasing (especially in the years after World War II) the number of members of the social system who exhibited signs of retreat (e.g., certain stationary poor sectarian fundamentalist families, or families exhibiting attributes of the so-called "culture of poverty") increased; and along with the retreat as time went by patterns became institutionalized. As a matter of fact, the group of people described by Jack Weller in his book *Yesterday's People*³³ are in part people of this kind, in contrast with the earlier rural Appalachians who were primarily farmers, and even when poor were what some call "respectable poor" or to be more accurate "conforming poor." The latter lived in a society where there was considerable equilibrium between culture, social, and personality systems and therefore little tendency for the kind of retreat we described above. In more recent years the accord of these three systems (which are society's major components) has been greatly reduced because

³³Jack Weller, *Yesterday's People* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965).

the culture system (through its technological aspect) has been changing much faster than the social system which is in turn changing faster than the personality system. This factor is producing the stress and in turn the tendencies for retreat we mentioned above.

During the rural to urban transition the overall interplay of social and economic dimensions we have been discussing has been influenced by some strong intervening variables which sometimes made the detection of overall transition patterns difficult. Typical in this case are the beginning of mining in Appalachia, the crisis in the mines in the fifties and early sixties, the extensive and rapid industrialization of the fringes of southeastern Appalachia, and the energy crisis.

Thus it appears likely that the most basic causes of the nature of contemporary Appalachian society (besides the settlers' common peasant values) are its large size³⁴ and the nature of its mountainous and forested terrain, which in earlier times (and in cases even today) made it difficult to penetrate--in contrast to Europe of that time, which had more roads and a central village pattern. As a consequence interaction, that powerful system-building process, eventually produced a semiautonomous social system which was in close accord with the personality system of people born and raised within the small and isolated rural social system, and with the culture system which eventually emerged. Similarly, an accord between these three societal systems (which as we have seen were in comparative balance and therefore promoted considerable satisfaction with life) and the natural environment gradually developed. The value placed on "Life in Harmony with Nature", which outsiders often do not fully understand, is a consequence of this development. This accord among the three societal systems and between them and the physical environment, is now seen by many Americans as highly desirable. Unfortunately, the partial but abrupt breaking up of this system of relationships through the increased role of gadgets (e.g., home appliances) in the mountaineer's life and the shifting of reference groups created many of the discords we described in the previous pages. Many of today's problems have similar causes, including the difficulty in introducing new cultural items while simultaneously maintaining many of the old attributes and a healthy balance among the three societal systems.³⁵

After thirty-odd years the outlook of many rural Appalachians and outsiders is changing. In light of such an outlook, in the concluding section of a previously published book we have proposed corresponding

³⁴About 250 miles wide and several hundred miles long.

³⁵For the study of changes in large urban centers, this type of "functional analysis" is probably a less desirable alternative than it is for the isolated rural Appalachian communities.

overall objectives for action agencies such as the extension service.³⁶ We suggested "the individual's adjustment to the changing new society as the overall objective of a state extension service." In other words we suggested that among specific objectives, in addition or along with those objectives dealing with agriculture, aspects of economic development, and other conventional objectives dealing with family and youth practices, the individual's internal world should be examined. For example, in that same book Robert Miller's chapter about retraining of the hard core unemployed in Appalachia points out the importance of internal conditions: Miller shows that even when retraining for skilled jobs takes place, some trainees tend to quit their jobs.³⁷ Furthermore, considering the broadness of the overall aims of extension, the role of the agent as a facilitator or in some cases even as coordinator of activities involving other agencies comes into focus. The same is true about the agent's role as a buffer to reduce the impact of the oncoming rapid changes.

In this light the small farmer who remained under-employed during the fifties, had a very low income, and did not accept other jobs because they did not pay enough, could and often did possess attributes that made particular types of behavior necessary. Even before World War II farm income was lower in rural Appalachia than the outside, but the reasons for accepting the lower income were in many cases different than they are today. Then, although the so-called general or subsistence Appalachian farmer often had income lower than farmers elsewhere or industrial workers in neighboring cities, he usually felt as important as these people did; and in cases more important. But later, in particular during the fifties, a considerable proportion of full-time farmers felt that they were not achieving "as much as they should" and therefore their attitudes and life styles often tended to reflect their feelings.³⁸ This is why understanding the status of mind of these

³⁶John Photiadis and Harry Schwarzweller, eds., Social Change in Rural Appalachia: Implications for Action Programs (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), Part IV.

³⁷Robert W. Miller "individual Adaptation to a Changing Society," in Photiadis and Schwarzweller. Also see Robert W. Miller, Wil J. Smith and Frederick A. Zeller, "Manpower Development and Job Training in Appalachian States" (Office of Research and Development, West Virginia University, 1972).

³⁸Thus within a short period of time in the late forties and early fifties the large majority abandoned their farms, often including those with bottom land. In part due to multiple ownership, emotional attachment, future security, and low returns from agriculture, most of these farms remain abandoned, or when in use they are operated by a part-time farmer, who supplements the income he now feels he should have from another occupation.

farmers--in particular those who are not old--and meaningful evaluation of action programs³⁹ is of particular importance to professionals who work with low income farmers, such as county agents and economists. The former should probably be aware of these conditions in order, when necessary, to avoid using indiscriminately conventional methods of teaching in dealing with people who are motivated this way, and the latter in order, when necessary, to be able to integrate these conditions into their models, which are often built solely on an economic basis.

Obviously, not all low-income farmers fall into this category; some remained--and some still do--in the low-income categories either because of lack of knowledge or because of predispositions which are not associated with feelings of relative deprivation or retreat from society, for instance traditional Appalachian values; however, these traditional values were in cases stretched, and often still are, to justify behavior which is less conventional. Furthermore, there are considerable differences among the various regions of Appalachia and as we explained elsewhere there are in cases dramatic differences even between neighboring communities. But in general, although they have not yet been extensively studied by scholars, the processes we described here have been important in shaping the sociocultural nature of the new rural Appalachia, in particular in areas like West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky. Otherwise, one can only partly explain on the basis of traditional Appalachian values⁴⁰ and changes in age distribution the noticeable proportion of low-income individuals in central Appalachia including some farmers, and cannot explain the appearance among some families--often non-farming ones--of life styles resembling those of the so-called "culture of poverty."⁴¹ On the other hand, one is quite impressed with other families

³⁹There are approaches to evaluation which are appropriate for application to programs of related nature and extension programs in general. Staff members of the Office of Research and Development of the Center for Extension and Continuing Education at West Virginia University are contributing to the development of such approaches. See Robert W. Miller, Evaluative Research in Rural Development, forthcoming book. Also see James C. Summers, ed., New Directions in Extension: Making Effective use of Pilot Programs (Office of Research and Development, Appalachian Center, West Virginia University, 1973).

⁴⁰And as a matter of fact, one cannot even explain through "continuous change principles" the persistence of such values. On the other hand, one can easily explain the trend towards part-time farming; the farmer keeps his other job to satisfy, in large part, societal demands for economic achievement and he keeps the farm, in large part, to satisfy himself.

⁴¹For information on function of values under stress see Hyman Rodman, "The Lower Class Value Stretch," Social Forces, 42, 11 (December, 1963). For information on Appalachian values see Loyal Jones, "Appalachian Values", from Appalachians Speak Up, compiled by Irmgard Best, (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College, 1972).

and the quick and successful socioeconomic adjustment of West Virginians in the suburbs of Cleveland where in the fifties and sixties opportunities were more numerous than in the hollows.

What is ironic in the case of rural Appalachian transition is that society seems to be going a full circle: after creating a turmoil it is coming back to take a new look at the life style of the Appalachian farmer of earlier days. This illustrates the importance of social planning in the light of "the individual's adjustment to society", the aim we mentioned previously. The new attitude of society is more than before visualizing the traditional Appalachian farm life as desirable. These attitudes are expressed in books such as Schumacher's Small is Beautiful,⁴² are expressed through the behavior of some city people who come into Appalachia to practice traditional farming, and most importantly through the conviction of an increasing number of people, many urban, who more than before, see a value in the lower tension produced by life on the Appalachian family farm. For some, this includes use of intermediate farm technology. Intermediate technology such as the kind that existed in the years before World War II was then adopted by the Appalachian farm family and community with very limited discord. But as we mentioned earlier, due to the shifting of reference groups in the post war years many rural Appalachians felt—in many cases all of a sudden—that both the income produced by this technology or the subsistence farm, and also the associated life styles were not satisfactory.

In general terms, trends today indicate rapid socioeconomic development and a more conventional type of integration of rural Appalachia into the larger society. Such integration will probably be based on a combination of new and old values; the retention of many of the old values will be influenced not so much by tendencies for retreat due to inability to cope with expectations of the larger society, but primarily because a number of the old Appalachian values, at least today, appear to be more functional than those of the larger society. This broader and more functional value orientation will probably contribute to the building of a more flexible rural social organization capable of absorbing the consequences which the region's new economic potential make possible. This should include reduced social conflict when outsiders move into the region and reduced general discords due to continuing technological changes, industrialization in particular. But as mentioned, integration of groups which are characterized as "systems in retreat" will probably be much slower, and this will include groups which are targets of action programs.

The traditional power structure and concomitant pressure tactics and abuses of the coal industry, at least in the immediate future and until a satisfying degree of integration into the larger society occurs, will increasingly be challenged by various parts of the Appalachian society. As a result of such challenges, political involvement of the

⁴²Ernst F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

coal industry at the local level has been, in most cases, drastically reduced, although it probably remains intense at the state and even federal level.⁴³

In the relatively distant future, trends in social forms of rural Appalachia will be determined, in large part, by the way the region fits into the emerging new ecological system. As it appears now, the new social forms will probably be determined by basic factors such as: coal reserves, proximity to the megalopolis, and its influence on industrialization and agricultural development (which might even include possibilities for small, energy-conscious, modified family-type farms), physical attraction of the region, age composition, and potential for preservation of social systems able to remain relatively autonomous from the larger society. Such autonomy could be possible due to the existence of physical barriers and it could be supported by motivations drawn out of urban attitudes and associated factors such as disillusionment with contemporary urban society.

In summary, it is important to remember that in contrast to the major part of this paper, which deals with a middle-range theory based in part on empirical data and depth interviews, this discussion of trends is in many respects speculative in nature. As a consequence, it is entirely possible that some of the trends discussed might not materialize and others not mentioned might eventually develop.

Analysis of social transition in terms of social systems obviously presents only one aspect of the rural transition process, which, however, can serve as a critical supplement to analyses focusing on other disciplines, for instance economics, cultural anthropology, political science, psychiatry, demography, and geography, among others. Similarly, the primary emphasis of this paper is on rural communities which were agricultural (as compared to mining ones) in the years before World

⁴³As is the case with other important social institutions, a major reason for this demand for a more responsible power structure is that the entire social organization including parts of its foundation (such as personality characteristics, attitudes for instance, and along with them related social norms) are now more than before exerting pressure for efficiency of critical parts of the organization's structure. Similarly some of the basic factors that have determined the particular nature of the Appalachian rural social organization, and in turn its inability to check undue power, are also changing. Two of these factors are: (a) the individual's lack of alternatives for securing a job (in the past often maintained through immigration) and (b) the social autonomy and relative isolation from the larger society and its markets of the rural Appalachian community, which among other things indirectly restricted mobility. Increased education and the emergence and increased activity of unions are more or less mutually dependent dimensions. As a matter of fact, pressure for unionization during the twenties and the thirties was in part the product of higher expectations that the closer linkages with the larger society had produced.

War II. In communities of this type, processes of transition can be studied more easily. The propositions thus derived can serve as guidelines for the study and understanding of the processes of rural social transition in mountainous communities throughout the world.⁴⁴

⁴⁴For instance one should be able to better understand the often-seen newspaper accounts from South America or the Far East indicating that stories of success in the city reached the home rural community and within a short period of time the large majority of the able bodied adults abandoned the particular mountainous region to come to the city, where due to lack of jobs they were forced to live in squalor. Similarly one should be able to better understand statements in professional journals indicating that in certain European countries a proportion of mountain farmers, instead of migrating to the city, had determined to choose traditional life and government assistance.

APPENDIX

In order to understand in a general sense the structure of the drastic changes and discords that have taken place in rural Appalachia in the last few decades one should probably have some understanding of the concept of "Social Systems." In essence, the recent rural Appalachian transition in large part involves the interplay of two systems: the larger society, and the rural Appalachian community or the rural social system in general.¹ The peculiarities of rural Appalachian transition, as compared to rural transition elsewhere (in the plains of America for instance), is in large part due to the fact that under certain conditions parts of the smaller system--the rural community in this case--have been incorporated into the larger system (the larger society) too fast. This rapid psychological identification with the larger society, which replaced identification with the local system, is a very crucial element in this whole transition process. As a result the smaller system has been unable to maintain its balance and therefore it has partially broken up. With this in mind we present below a simplified description of the structure and function of the Social System in general.²

The Social System (A Simplified Description)

When, for example, during a conference or training program you move into a dormitory, you meet and associate with other colleagues, or as we say in sociology, you interact with one another. Soon you start interacting more frequently with some colleagues than with others. This repeated interaction, as time goes by, develops into patterns which we recognize as a social system.

The Structure of the Social System

There are a number of elements that can be identified in this structure; for instance, soon you and your colleagues, without being fully aware, will start developing informal rules as to how you should treat each other. We call these rules norms. Along with these norms you will develop some sort of sanctions that are associated with the

¹The interplay of the above two systems has in part been independent of the economic system as such; in part, however the economic system became the instrument through which the interplay took place, and in part the economic system determined the interplay.

²Parts of this description, in particular the terms used to define elements and processes are taken from Charles Loomis, The Social System (New York: Van Nostrand, 1960), Chapter 1.

enforcement of these norms. Also, as time goes by, each one of you will start having some status (position), and start playing a certain role, acquiring some kind of rank, while some persons (one or more) will start possessing and using more power than others. In the meantime, the goals or objectives of the group are becoming more clear (e.g., the goal could be just to have a good time, or good time combined with studying, etc.). Finally, some abstract awareness of the beliefs of the people involved will come into the picture, their sentiments in relation to the group, and the facilities (physical or emotional) available to the system. All the above elements constitute the structure of the social system and can be found in any social system.

The Function of the Social System

The above structure is possible because there are certain processes or functions that take place. Such processes are of two kinds. First, those that are more specific and influence each individual element and which we call elemental. For instance, the process of application of sanctions makes possible that part of the structure that we call sanctions. Similarly, the process of evaluation of the behavior of those involved in the system makes possible the setting up of norms that are part of the structure.

Second, those processes that we call master processes can influence all elements. For instance, the process of communication is instrumental in causing norms, ranks, sanctions, objectives, etc., to come into being. For instance, how would you otherwise know what the other members of the system have in their minds as to what the norms or a person's rank should be? Similarly, besides communication we have the master process of boundary maintenance, the effort of the system to preserve its boundaries, and in turn, its identity. Members of your clique often refer to the good times they have with each other, while at the same time they try to keep out people who think differently. In the old rural Appalachian community there was a lot of talk as to how untrustworthy city people were, and about the good life the small community (which, of course, is also a social system and a solid one) was providing. Another master process is that of systemic linkage which involves the adoption or dissemination of information of characteristics of one system by another. For instance, extensive systemic linkage between rural Appalachia and the outside world started when automobiles, hard-surfaced roads, and later, television, were introduced. Different items or ideas were adopted at different times. It is obvious that when systemic linkage takes place too quickly, the boundary maintenance process will try to interfere and reduce the impact of incoming information. However, sometimes the systemic linkage is mainly one-sided and becomes overwhelming, as it was in the case between the Appalachian hollow and the larger society. In that case, the recipient system had difficulty preserving its boundaries and functioning as an effective independent system. In a similar fashion, the master process we call social control, which is the process that brings to conformity those that deviate from the norms, will also weaken. Institutionalization is

a master process that, as the system continues functioning for a considerable time, makes the structure of the social system more permanent. Finally comes the process of socialization whose purpose is to teach the new members the ins and outs of the structure of the system. Excluding systemic linkage (in particular with the larger society) all the above-mentioned processes were more intense in the old Appalachian community; the same was true with the elements of the structure; norms were strong and clear, status was well-defined, and objectives were also clear.

All these processes (master and elemental) constitute what we call the function of the social system, and they are necessary for the existence and the preservation of the structure. For example, norms are not possible in any social system if the process of communication does not function to tell about members' agreements as to what the norms should be.

A Few Principles About the Nature of the Social System

Structure and function exist in any social system regardless of size, but in some systems, for instance in the family or the rural community, we have a much better defined and more efficient system than in a situation, say, of three people who meet each other during one of the daily sessions of in-service training and have coffee together now and again.

This group of three people can be seen as a sub-system of the daily session social system (which is a very loose social system); furthermore, this social system could be seen as a sub-system of the in-service training program's social system (because people who interact within the program form a social system that, like any other system, has structure and function). The terms system and sub-system, in other words, are relative terms and can be used in any situation where one social system is part of another. For instance, the rural Appalachian community and even rural Appalachia in general are parts of the larger American society. Obviously as compared to Appalachia or rural Appalachia which are loose systems, the individual rural Appalachian community is normally, and was more so in the past, a cohesive and powerful social system. Because of its isolation, population homogeneity, and face to face interactions, the rural Appalachian social system, in particular in the past, exerted a strong influence over its members, to the degree that reality was perceived in many respects quite differently than in urban centers. Excluding the family and a few other social systems of excessive influence, social system membership in the city is multiple and the large majority of the systems have limited influence on the day to day behavior of the urbanites.

When sub-systems are in accord with the larger system we say that we have equilibrium between the system and its sub-systems. For instance, in the past the norms of the old Appalachian rural community were in line with the norms of the various family and church social systems.

We use the term equilibrium also to describe a good relationship between elements of the structure of the social system and its processes. For instance, when many rural people start going to the city and do not communicate sufficiently, norms, statuses, and objectives of the rural community social system become inefficient.

A social system (which as we said before, is nothing more than the product of persistent interaction) does not operate in a vacuum, but has an environment. The environment of the social system consists of the personality and culture systems. These two are expected to be in accord with the social system. In other words, the personality system, which is an abstraction of the types of personality of the members of the social system, has exerted and is continuing to exert a strong influence on the nature of the social system. For instance, if you bring together in one place people with a certain type of personality, and somewhere else people of a different personality type, you will have a development of social system structures (e.g., norms, etc.) that will be different in the two places. In other words, the more in line with the personality system a social system is, the more the equilibrium between the two.

The same is true with the culture system. In very simple terms, the culture system is the abstraction of the way all the things the members of the system possess, do, and think about are interwoven. When social, personality, and culture systems are in accord (or fit with each other), we say that we approach equilibrium of these three systems. Thus, the more the culture system, when changing, deviates from the social system (which we said earlier is patterned interaction: norms, objectives, etc.) and the personality system, the greater the disequilibrium. For instance, rapid systemic linkage, or acceptance of many ideas and items from the outside by the old rural community could upset social relationships (that is, the social system) and, in turn, the personality system. Furthermore, given that the personality system usually changes more slowly than the social system, and the social system changes more slowly than the culture system, cultural changes (which as we indicated include technological changes) can produce dysfunctions in the social system and, often to a greater extent, in the personality system. A typical example is the impact of new technological changes of the forties and fifties on the rural Appalachian community. For instance, changes such as hard surface roads, automobiles, radio, and later television, along with the availability of jobs in the city (which existed even before the forties) weakened the influence of the boundary maintenance process; in other words, indirectly, technological changes influenced the way people saw their small community and its life style and in turn increased their interest in certain aspects of urban life, which eventually led to heavy out-migration. Out-migration in turn influenced people's personalities, in particular because many individual personalities were not ready for the new social and cultural conditions within the small community or the city; typical in this case is the breaking up of the kinship group.